

## Res Cogitans

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Volume 2 | Issue 1

Article 21

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7-30-2011

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John Lindsay  
*Stanford University*

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### Recommended Citation

Lindsay, John (2011) "Greatest Difficulty Argument in Plato's Parmenides 133c-134c," *Res Cogitans*: Vol. 2: Iss. 1, Article 21.

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# Greatest Difficulty Argument in Plato's Parmenides 133c-134c<sup>1</sup>

**John Lindsay**  
*Stanford University*

Published online: 30 July 2011  
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## Abstract

This paper will offer a five-step interpretation of the Greatest Difficulty Argument (GDA) in Plato's Parmenides (133c-134c). I agree with Sandra Peterson that Plato presents two arguments in the GDA (the active argument up to 134b6 and the passive argument following). However I will argue that Peterson's interpretation of the passive argument relies on an unintuitive premise. I will present a modified passive argument that is not dependent on the unintuitive premise. I will lastly present an interpretation of 134b12 so that it contributes to both the active and passive routes.

In the *Parmenides* Plato shows us problems with his theory of forms through a series of arguments that Parmenides directs against Socrates. In this paper I will focus on the greatest difficulty argument from 133c-134c. Parmenides introduces the argument at 133a8-9: "Then do you see, Socrates...how great the difficulty is if one marks things off as forms, themselves by themselves?"<sup>2</sup> The argument takes us from this hypothesis to the absurd conclusion that "[the forms] cannot even be known [by us]" (133b4-6). There has been much secondary literature attempting to accurately interpret this argument. Sandra Peterson's influential paper<sup>3</sup> posits two arguments. In this paper I will show that one of these arguments (the passive) relies on an unintuitive premise, and I will offer a five-step interpretation of the entire passage that is not dependent on this premise.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper has already been published in *Ex Nihilo, the University of Texas at Austin Undergraduate Philosophy Journal* (Spring 2011).

<sup>2</sup> All Greek translations by Mary Louise Gill and Paul Ryan. See Plato, *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1997), 367-368.

<sup>3</sup> Sandra Peterson, "The Greatest Difficulty for Plato's Theory of Forms: the Unknowability Argument of Parmenides 133c-134c," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 63 (1981): 1-16. Because I cite this paper so frequently I will cite page numbers from her article in the body of my text.

### Step One (133c3-7)

In step one Parmenides proves **A**, that if *x* is a form then *x* is not in us. Peterson shows, and Rickless agrees, that Parmenides uses two premises to prove this.<sup>4</sup> He first posits at 133c4 that each form is itself for itself, and second at 133c4-6 that nothing in us is itself for itself.<sup>5</sup> This yields the conclusion **A**, said explicitly at 133c5, that “none of [the forms are] in us.”

### Step Two (133c8-d6, 133e4-134a2)

Parmenides introduces in step two the principles **B<sub>F</sub>** and **B<sub>S</sub>**. At 133c8-d1 he says: “All the characters that are what they are in relation to each other have their being in relation to themselves but not in relation to things that belong to us.” Peterson interprets this passage as **B<sub>F</sub>**: “If *x* is what it is in relation to *y*, then if *x* is a form, *y* is a form” (p. 7). She understands this principle to mean: “the answer to the question ‘What is it?’ asked about a form will not mention any non-forms” (p. 3). More broadly, she argues that for any *x* and *y*, if *x* is what it is in relation to *y* then *x* will be defined *only* by reference to *y* (p. 5).<sup>6</sup> For example if a knowledge is what it is in relation to a truth, then that knowledge will be defined only by reference to that truth (knowledge *of x*).

Some commentators interpret **B<sub>F</sub>** as arguing for a divorce thesis: either relational forms (those which are what they are in relation to another) have no relations to non-forms<sup>7</sup> or all forms have no relations to what is in us.<sup>8</sup> However, as Rickless points out, it is unlikely that Parmenides would use the premise that forms have no relations to sensibles, because it is an essential part of Plato’s theory of forms that sensibles have their properties by partaking of forms.<sup>9</sup> Peterson also gives another argument against

<sup>4</sup> See Peterson (ibid., 6-7); and Samuel Rickless, (1) “How Parmenides Saved the Theory of Forms,” *The Philosophical Review* 107 (Oct. 1998): 535.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Rickless shows evidence from the Parmenides, Phaedo, Symposium, and Timaeus to support the second premise in (2) *Plato's Forms in Transition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 17-20.

<sup>6</sup> Peterson’s interpretation might seem too extreme, but for this essay I will assume it.

<sup>7</sup> See Harold Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), 283-4 n. 191; and Norio Fujisawa, “□χεν, Μετέχεν, and Idioms of ‘Paradeigmatism’ in Plato’s Theory of Forms,” *Phronesis* 19 (1974): 30-34.

<sup>8</sup> See Rudolph Weingartner, *The Unity of the Platonic Dialogue: The Cratylus, the Protagoras, the Parmenides* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1973), 185-6.

<sup>9</sup> See Rickless (ibid. [2]), 88. ‘Divorce Thesis’ is Peterson’s terminology (ibid., 3).

this divorce thesis: the premise introduced at 134b12 would be immediately derivable if we interpret a divorce thesis (p. 11-12). Because we might want to (and I will argue that we should) interpret 134b12 as offering new content based on premises developed in the greatest difficulty argument, we should give up the divorce thesis interpretation.

At 133d2-5 Plato says: “These things that belong to us...are in their turn what they are in relation to themselves, but not in relation to the forms; and all the things named in this way are of themselves but not of the forms.” Peterson interprets from “are...what they are in relation to themselves” and “are of themselves” **B<sub>S</sub>**: “If x is what it is in relation to y, then if x is in us then y is in us” (p. 7). At 133e4-134a1 Parmenides repeats principles **B<sub>F</sub>** and **B<sub>S</sub>**:

Things in us do not have their power in relation to forms, nor do they have theirs in relation to us; but, I repeat, forms are what they are of themselves and in relation to themselves, and things that belong to us are, in the same way, what they are in relation to themselves.

Parmenides uses the phrase “have their power,” instead of “are what they are” or “have being” and I agree with Peterson that Plato offers nothing new in this change of phrase (p. 2-3). Likewise, instead of ‘alongside us’ (133c9-d2) he uses ‘in us’ (133e5) and instead of “in relation to things that belong to us” (133c9-d1) he uses “in relation to us” (133e5), and I take both of these pairs to contain equivalent phrases.

### Step Three (133d7-133e4, 134a3-b2)

In step three, Parmenides implies both **C<sub>M</sub>** and **C<sub>K</sub>**. He implies **C<sub>M</sub>**: if x is master of y then x is what it is in relation to y. To do so he argues [**C<sub>M</sub>** combined with **B<sub>F</sub>**] and [**C<sub>M</sub>** combined with **B<sub>S</sub>**]. Then he implies **C<sub>K</sub>**: If x is knowledge of y then x is what it is in relation to y. To do so he argues [**C<sub>K</sub>** combined with **B<sub>F</sub>**] and [**C<sub>K</sub>** combined with **B<sub>S</sub>**]. Peterson only writes that **C<sub>K</sub>** is “suggested by 134a-b,” (p. 6) and therefore she does not fully explain how Plato implies **C<sub>K</sub>**. The preceding implication of **C<sub>M</sub>** before **C<sub>K</sub>** is important because the symmetry between the master-slave example and the knowledge example is a necessary step for Plato to imply **C<sub>K</sub>**.<sup>10</sup> Parmenides says in 133e2-e4:

<sup>10</sup> Unlike Peterson, Rickless also seems to argue for the necessity of the symmetry: “knowledge is the sort of thing that (*like masters or slaves*) has only relative being” (ibid. [2], 90). James Forrester assumes the necessity in “Arguments an Able Man Could Refute: Parmenides 133b-134e,” *Phronesis* 19 (1974): 234-236; and so does Frank Lewis who cites as evidence 134a3-4 and a6-7 in “Parmenides on Separation and the Knowability of the Forms: Plato Parmenides 133a ff.,” *Philosophical Studies* 35 (Feb. 1979): 114. Forrester and Lewis both argue against the soundness of the symmetry in order to present the overall argument as unsuccessful.

...being a human being, [somebody] is a master or slave of a human being. Mastery itself, on the other hand, is what it is of slavery itself; and in the same way, slavery itself is slavery of mastery itself.

At 133e3-4 he literally asserts [**C<sub>M</sub>** combined with **B<sub>F</sub>**]: if x is master of y and x is a form, then y is a form. Then at 133e2-3 he argues [**C<sub>M</sub>** combined with **B<sub>S</sub>**]: if x is master of y and x is alongside us (a sensible), y is alongside us (a sensible). Therefore he implies **C<sub>M</sub>**: if x is master of y then x is what it is in relation to y.

Parmenides next says at 134a3-7:

So too...knowledge itself, what knowledge is, would be knowledge of that truth itself, which is what truth is...Furthermore, each particular knowledge, what it is, would be knowledge of some particular thing, of what that thing is.

He asserts two instances (at 134a3-4 concerning the form of knowledge itself and at 134a6-7 concerning each particular form of knowledge) of [**C<sub>K</sub>** combined with **B<sub>F</sub>**]: if x is knowledge of y and x is a form, then y is a form. Then at 134a9-10 he says:

....But wouldn't knowledge that belongs to us be of the truth that belongs to our world? And wouldn't it follow that each particular knowledge that belongs to us is in turn knowledge of some particular thing in our world?

Here he presents a parallel set of two instances (concerning the form of knowledge itself and each form of each particular knowledge) of [**C<sub>K</sub>** combined with **B<sub>S</sub>**]: if x is knowledge of y and x is alongside us (a sensible), y is alongside us (a sensible). He implies **C<sub>K</sub>**: If x is knowledge of y then x is what it is in relation to y.

#### Step Four (134b3-10)

Parmenides reaches the conclusion **D** in step four that there is no knowledge x of Form y in us. Parmenides first reminds us at 134b3-4 of **A**: "As you agree, we neither have the forms themselves nor can they belong to us." As Peterson argues, without using 134b6-7 or 134b9, Parmenides can reach his desired conclusion **D** (p. 8). This is what Peterson calls the active argument. Parmenides only needs to combine **A** with [**C<sub>K</sub>**\* combined with **B<sub>S</sub>**\*] (if x is knowledge of *Form* y and x is in us, then *Form* y is in us—note the specification of y as a form). This yields **D**: if x is knowledge of Form y, x is not in us.

At 134b6-7, Parmenides says: "And surely the kinds themselves, what each of them is, are known by the form of knowledge itself?" Many commentators interpret 134b6-7 as

problematic self-predication where the form of knowledge itself ‘knows.’<sup>11</sup> However, given that self-predication does no work in the argument that I have presented, I agree with Peterson that Plato does not argue for self-predication.<sup>12</sup>

Peterson argues instead that 134b6-7 makes a claim about “the appropriate *kind* of knowledge itself” (p. 5-6). She says if 134b6-7 was actually about “knowledge itself” it should be at least compatible with 134a3-4 because that passage also describes “knowledge itself.” 134a3-4 says “knowledge itself” is of “truth-itself.” 134b6-7 says (assuming the equivalence of ‘x is knowledge of y’ and ‘y is known by x’) that “‘knowledge itself’ is of ‘particular [forms].’” It doesn’t make sense for Plato to say knowledge itself is of two different things, so it seems we should accept 134a3-4 as describing ‘knowledge-itself,’ and 134b6-7 as describing particular forms of knowledge. I agree with Peterson on this interpretation that “knowledge-itself” refers to the appropriate kind of knowledge.

Peterson thinks that 134b6-7 begins the passive argument, and thus she interprets it as **2P**: if x is knowledge of y and y is a form, then x is a form (p. 8). To derive **2P**, Peterson says Plato combines **B<sub>F</sub>** (If y is what it is in relation to x, then if y is a form then x is a form) and an unstated premise (**III<sub>P</sub>** in Peterson’s notation), which is equivalent to: If x is knowledge of y then y is what it is in relation to x (p. 7). Peterson finally combines **A** with **2P** to yield **3P**: if x is knowledge of y and y is a form, then x is not in us (p. 7). **3P** is equivalent to **D**. Peterson interprets 134b9 as support for **3P** because Parmenides says: “the very thing we don’t have,” (‘thing’ refers to the x form of knowledge) (p. 7, 11).

However, I argue, as Rickless agrees,<sup>13</sup> that **III<sub>P</sub>** is too weak of a premise to attribute the passive argument to Plato. **III<sub>P</sub>** would “get such unwelcome results as: ‘Justice itself is what it is pros [relative to] my knowledge of justice itself.’”<sup>14</sup> As Peterson argues, if something is what it is in relation to y, then it can only be defined by reference to y. Unlike knowledge, which seems like it can only be defined in reference

<sup>11</sup> See F.M. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides* (New York: Humanities Press, 1951), 98; Richard Robinson, *Plato's Earlier Dialectic*, Second Edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), 235-6; Weingartner (ibid., 186); and Forrester (ibid., 234).

<sup>12</sup> Peterson (ibid., 4). Lewis also offers another argument against a “vicious” self-predication reading; he cites passages from the Charmides that suggest that Plato is *not* sensitive to a difference between a “syntactical” SP present in “is knowledge of” (does not attribute knowing to the form itself) and a “vicious” SP in “knows,” (does attribute ‘knowing’ to the form itself) and thus the “vicious” self-predication reading is unjustified (ibid., 115-116).

<sup>13</sup> Rickless (ibid. [1], 535-536).

<sup>14</sup> Peterson admits this result from **III<sub>P</sub>**, but she still attributes the passive argument and **III<sub>P</sub>** to Plato (ibid., 9).

to what it is of, it seems plainly false that to give a definition of what Justice is, someone would only be able to refer to my knowledge of Justice. Therefore Plato would not have used the passive argument, which requires **III**P.

Thus I think we are left with two options. One: salvage Peterson's passive argument in a way that would not require **III**P or two: reject Peterson's passive argument and interpret 134b6-7 and 134b9 as separate from the passive argument. The problem with option two is that the only way to interpret 134b6-7 and 134b9 as separate from the passive argument renders them superfluous.

The most natural way to interpret 134b6-7 as separate from the passive argument is to interpret it as repeating the content of 134a6-7 (besides switching 'knowledge of' to 'is known by' and switching the subject and predicate): "Furthermore, each particular knowledge, what it is, would be knowledge of some particular thing, of what that thing is."<sup>15</sup> Recall that we interpreted 134a6-7 as [**C<sub>K</sub>** combined with **B<sub>F</sub>**]: if x is knowledge of y and x is a form, then y is a form. We would interpret 134b9 as combining **A** with [**C<sub>K</sub>** combined with **B<sub>F</sub>**] to yield: if x is knowledge of y and x is a form, then y is a form and x is not in us. However, this does not get Plato any closer to **D**, even though it is not necessarily repetitive.<sup>16</sup>

It does not seem likely to me that Plato would waste time writing unnecessary words, and therefore I will offer a modified Peterson passive argument that is not dependent on **III**P. I argue that we need to change **2P** to **2P†**: If x is knowledge of y then x is a form iff y is a form. This is derived from a new premise, **B<sub>F</sub>†**, combined with **C<sub>K</sub>**. The premise **B<sub>F</sub>†** is: if x is what is in relation to y then x is a form iff y is a form. The premise **B<sub>F</sub>†** would have serious implications for our interpretations of 133c8-d5, 133e2-134a1, and 134a3-10.

For step two it seems reasonable to change our interpretation from **B<sub>F</sub>** to **B<sub>F</sub>†** because "are what they are in relation to each other" (133c8), "have their being in relation to themselves" (133c9), and "are what they are of themselves" (133e6) seem to allow the additional restriction added to the consequent of **B<sub>F</sub>**: "AND if y is a form, then x is a form." Likewise Plato uses the same phrases to argue for the proposition that we interpreted as **B<sub>S</sub>**, and thus it seems that we can, and *should* to maintain symmetry, interpret **B<sub>S</sub>** as **B<sub>S</sub>†**, if x is what is in relation to y then x is in us iff y is in us.

<sup>15</sup> Lewis assumes 134b6-7 is repeating 134a3-4 and *by implication*, 134a6-7; however, unlike me he reads 134b6-7 as about "knowledge itself" (without a "vicious" self-predication) (ibid., 116).

<sup>16</sup> Because he denies the passive argument, but agrees with the rest of Peterson's argument, this is how I understand Rickless to interpret 134b6-7 and 134b9 (ibid. [2], 90). Rickless thinks that **B<sub>F</sub>** (what he calls premise A) is not used in the 'greatest difficulty' argument to get to the conclusion, but is only used in the 'more terrible' argument (ibid. [2], 85-93).

It also seems reasonable to change our interpretations of  $\mathbf{B}_S$  and  $\mathbf{B}_F$  within the master-slave example of step three to  $\mathbf{B}_S^\dagger$  and  $\mathbf{B}_F^\dagger$ . At 133e2-3 Parmenides says “a master *or* slave of,” thereby legitimizing the addition to the consequent of  $\mathbf{B}_S$ : “AND if y is in us, then x is in us.” For 133e3-4, Parmenides likewise describes mastery as “of slavery itself,” and slavery as “of mastery itself,” thus making  $\mathbf{B}_F^\dagger$  reasonable. Unfortunately, for the knowledge example at 134a3-10,  $\mathbf{B}_S^\dagger$  and  $\mathbf{B}_F^\dagger$  are not explicitly stated. In both the knowledge itself and particular knowledge instances, Parmenides only describes knowledge as *of* an object of knowledge. However, given the weakness of **IIP**, I assert that Plato does indeed imply  $\mathbf{B}_S^\dagger$  and  $\mathbf{B}_F^\dagger$ .

To get from  $2P^\dagger$  to **D**, consider the following.  $2P^\dagger$  is equivalent to: if x is knowledge of y then [(if x is a form then y is a form) and (if y is a form then x is a form)]. Combining  $2P^\dagger$  with **A** (if x is a form then x is not in us), we can assert: if x is knowledge of y then [(if x is a form then y is a form and x is not in us) and (if y is a form then x is not in us)]. We can cite 134b9 “the very thing we don’t have,” as evidence of Plato supporting the combination of **A** with  $2P^\dagger$ . Lastly, assuming only that y is a form, we have the conclusion **D**: if x is knowledge of Form y then x is not in us. Overall I support two routes to **D**: the active route from **A** with [ $\mathbf{C}_K^*$  combined with  $\mathbf{B}_S^*$ ] and the passive route from **A** with  $2P^\dagger$ .

### Step Five (134b11-c3)

In the last step Parmenides goes from **D** to his overall conclusion that we do not know the forms. For Peterson’s active argument (which uses **D** from the active route), Peterson reaches her overall conclusion with three premises.

Her first premise **E** is: we are called by a name of the form  $\Phi$  iff there is a likeness of the form  $\Phi$  in us (p. 7). She gets this from 133d1-2: “Whether one posits the latter as likenesses or in some other way, it is by *partaking of them* that we come to be called by their various names. Peterson’s translates the clause: “things alongside us...having which,” which she says: “tells us that some of the things alongside us are the same as what is *had* by us, i.e., in us” (p. 3). Thus she translates the μετέχειν (here translated as ‘partaking of’) of this sentence as “having,” and the relative plural pronoun οὗν (here translated as ‘them’) as referring to the likenesses.

Her next premise **F** (unstated in Parmenides 133c-134c) is: if anything x is a likeness of a form  $\Phi$ , x is a  $\Phi$  (p. 7) We can look at Phaedo 102c2,4,7, where having a likeness of a form gives a human the form’s quality. Lastly, she uses premise **G** (also unstated in Parmenides 133c-134c): ‘knows Form y’ and its active inflections are names of the Form of knowledge in us of Form y (p. 7). Altogether, because there is nothing that is a knowledge in us of Form y, (1) by **F**, there is nothing x that it is a likeness of the Form



of knowledge in us of Form *y*. (2) By **E** we are not called by a name of the Form of knowledge in us of Form *y*, and (3) by **G** we are not called by ‘knows Form *y*.’ All the premises for this conclusion have appeared before 134b2 (unless we count 134b3-4 where Parmenides reminds us of **A**).

For her passive argument, Peterson uses only the unstated premise **H** (which is essentially a simplified version of **E**, **F**, and **G**): if we know anything *y*, then there is some knowledge *x* in us such that *x* is knowledge of *y* (p. 7).<sup>17</sup> **H** combined with **D** yields immediately the conclusion that we do not know any forms. Therefore her passive conclusion matches Plato’s words at 134b11: “So none of the forms is known by us.” At 134b12 Parmenides says, “because we don’t partake of knowledge itself.” In her passive argument Peterson interprets “partake of” as “have,” an interpretation supported by Cornford and Fujisawa.<sup>18</sup> When she uses **H**, Peterson interprets 134b12 as repeating the content of 134b9 (p. 8, 11).<sup>19</sup>

However again I do not think that Plato would repeat unnecessary words, so I will offer an interpretation of 134b12 in which μετέχειν means “partake of,” not “have,” and it explains Parmenides’s final steps. Peterson admits the possibility of 134b12 meaning “partake of,” however she does not specify exactly how 134b12 would support the premises that take Plato from **D** to his conclusion (p. 11). Peterson does think that “knowledge itself” in 134b12 means the appropriate kind of knowledge *x* of Form *y*, to maintain symmetry with her interpretation of 134b6-7 and 134b9, and I agree with this (p. 11).

At 134b12 I think Plato is using the verb μετέχειν (translated here “partake of”) as he uses it traditionally at Parmenides 130b2-4 and in the Phaedo (102c2,4,7, 103b6) to mean “partake of,” which is the relation of the sensibles to the form.<sup>20</sup> To understand why, we must turn back to 133d1-2, where Peterson translated the μετέχειν as “having,” and the relative plural pronoun οὗ as referring to the likenesses. Fujisawa agrees with

<sup>17</sup> Unlike Peterson, Rickless uses **H** to get from **D** (*from the active route*) to the conclusion (ibid. [1], 535-536).

<sup>18</sup> Cornford interprets it as “have” because of reasons related to his assumption that 134b6-7 shows “vicious” self-predication (ibid., 99). Fujisawa interprets it as “have” because he thinks all sensibles partake of forms, and thus to say they do not *partake of* a form is false (ibid., 33). However, as I will show it seems entirely acceptable *within the passive argument* to say that we do not partake of the appropriate form of knowledge of Form *y*.

<sup>19</sup> Lewis also thinks that 134b12 is repeating 134b9, which, unlike Peterson’s interpretation, is itself instantiating the point made at 134b3-4 (that we do not have the forms) to: “the form of knowledge, too is not present in us” (ibid., 116, 126 n. 20). It seems to me that Lewis derives his overall conclusion only from 134a3-4 and 134b9, and thus his argument resembles something like Peterson’s passive argument.

<sup>20</sup> Fujisawa points out this traditional use of μετέχειν (ibid., 31, 32, n. 4)

Peterson on this translation because he thinks Plato incorrectly uses μετέχειν instead of ἵκειν in both the ‘greatest difficulty’ argument and the ‘more terrible’ argument to serve his introduction of an alternative use of πρὸς at 133c8ff (p. 34). It seems reasonable to think that if Plato introduced a new sense of the word πρὸς, he would rely on traditional uses of his other words to not further confuse his readers. It also seems acceptable to me to take ἵκειν as referring to the forms.<sup>21</sup> In addition, if we translate μετέχειν in 133d1-2 as “partaking of,” then we can read Plato’s use of μετέχειν in 134b12 as referring back to a modified **E\*** premise introduced at 133d1-2.

Therefore we can interpret 133d1-2 as **E\***: we are called by a name of the Form  $\Phi$  iff we partake of the Form  $\Phi$ . We would add an unstated premise **I**: we partake of the Form  $\Phi$  iff there is a likeness of the form  $\Phi$  in us. The idea that partaking of the form  $\Phi$  is equivalent to having the likeness of the form  $\Phi$  is suggested for example in the *Phaedo* 100d-102c and Peterson herself agrees (p. 10). Now consider the argument: because there is nothing that is a knowledge in us of Form  $y$ , (1) by **F**, there is nothing  $x$  that is a likeness of the Form of knowledge in us of Form  $y$ ; (2) By **I** we do not partake of the Form of knowledge in us of Form  $y$ ; (3) By **E\*** we are not called by a name of the Form of knowledge in us of Form  $y$ ; and (4) by **G** we are not called by ‘knows Form  $y$ .’ Now we can interpret 134b12 as asserting (2).<sup>22</sup>

Overall I have offered a five-step interpretation of the ‘greatest difficulty’ argument in *Parmenides* 133c-134c. I argued specifically to change Peterson’s passive argument in order to avoid reliance on the weak premise **III<sup>P</sup>** and to change the premises that *Parmenides* uses to go from **D** to the conclusion in order to interpret 134b12 as contributing to the argument.

<sup>21</sup> Cited by Fujisawa (*ibid.*, 32, n. 8), Cherniss (*ibid.*, n. 101, 102) and two other commentators support this reading.

<sup>22</sup> We could use this apparatus with **D** from the active and passive routes. Peterson herself might have had a similar “apparatus” in mind, as the one premise that she offers to connect **D** to the conclusion while interpreting μετέχειν in 134b12 as “partaking of” is: “If a form  $x$  is some knowledge of something  $y$ , then any likeness  $z$  of  $x$  is a knowledge of  $y$ ” (*ibid.*, 11).

## Appendix

I have organized this according to the five steps of the paper. Notice that all premises of active argument occur before 134b3-4 but some premises of passive argument occur after 134b3-4.

STEP ONE:

**A** If  $x$  is a form then  $x$  is not in us. 133c3-7

STEP TWO:

**B<sub>F</sub>** If  $x$  is what it is in relation to  $y$ , then if  $x$  is a form,  $y$  is a form. 133c8-d1, 133e4-134a1

**B<sub>S</sub>** If  $x$  is what it is in relation to  $y$ , then if  $x$  is in us then  $y$  is in us. 133d2-5, 133e4-134a1

STEP THREE:

**C<sub>M</sub>** If  $x$  is master of  $y$  then  $x$  is what it is in relation to  $y$ . 133e2-e4

**C<sub>K</sub>** If  $x$  is knowledge of  $y$  then  $x$  is what it is in relation to  $y$ . 134a3-7, 134a9-10

STEP FOUR:

### Peterson's Active Argument Part I.

**C<sub>K</sub>\*** If  $x$  is knowledge of *Form*  $y$  then  $x$  is what it is in relation to *Form*  $y$ . (instantiated **C<sub>K</sub>** of step three)

**B<sub>S</sub>\*** If  $x$  is what it is in relation to *Form*  $y$ , then if  $x$  is in us then *Form*  $y$  is in us. (instantiated **B<sub>S</sub>** of step two)

**D**: If  $x$  is knowledge of *Form*  $y$ ,  $x$  is not in us. (**A** 134b3-4 + [**C<sub>K</sub>\*** + **B<sub>S</sub>\***] 134a9-10)

### Peterson's Passive Argument Part I.

**IIIP** If  $x$  is knowledge of  $y$  then  $y$  is what it is in relation to  $x$ . (unstated)

**2P** If  $x$  is knowledge of  $y$  and  $y$  is a form, then  $x$  is a form. (**B<sub>F</sub>** + **IIIP**) 134b6-7

**3P (Equivalent to D)**: if  $x$  is knowledge of  $y$  and  $y$  is a form, then  $x$  is not in us. (**A** + **2P**) 134b9

### Revised Passive Argument Part I (does not rely on unintuitive **IIIP**).

**B<sub>F</sub>†** If  $x$  what it is in relation to  $y$  then  $x$  is a form iff  $y$  is a form. 133c8-9, 133e6, 133e3-4

**B<sub>S</sub>†** If  $x$  is what is in relation to  $y$  then  $x$  is in us iff  $y$  is in us. 133c8-9, 133e6, 133e2-3

**2P†** If  $x$  is knowledge of  $y$  then  $x$  is a form iff  $y$  is a form. (**B<sub>F</sub>†** + **C<sub>K</sub>**) 134b6-7

**D** If  $x$  is knowledge of *Form*  $y$  then  $x$  is not in us. (**A** + **2P†**) 134b9

STEP FIVE:

### Peterson's Active Argument Part II.

**D** There is nothing that is a knowledge in us of Form y. (conclusion of Active Argument Part I)

**F** If anything x is a likeness of a form  $\Phi$ , x is a  $\Phi$  (unstated, but I suggest Phaedo 102c2,4,7)

**E** We are called by a name of the form  $\Phi$  iff there is a likeness of the form  $\Phi$  in us. 133d1-2

**G** 'Knows Form y' is a name of the Form of knowledge in us of Form y (unstated).  
There is nothing x that it is a likeness of the Form of knowledge in us of Form y. (**D** + **F**)

We are not called by a name of the Form of knowledge in us of Form y. [**(D + F) + E**]

We are not called by 'knows Form y.' [**((D + F) + E) + G**]

### **Peterson's Passive Argument Part II.**

**H**: If we know anything y, then there is some knowledge x in us of y (unstated)

**D**: There is no knowledge x in us of Form y. (conclusion of Passive Argument Part I)

We do not know any forms. (**H + D**) 134b11

### **Revised Passive Argument Part II** (makes use of 134b12\*).

**D** There is nothing that is a knowledge in us of Form y. (conclusion of Passive Argument Part I)

**F** If anything x is a likeness of a form  $\Phi$ , x is a  $\Phi$  (unstated, but I suggest Phaedo 102c2,4,7)

**I**: We partake of the Form  $\Phi$  iff there is a likeness of the form  $\Phi$  in us. (Phaedo 100d-102c)

**E\***: We are called by a name of the Form  $\Phi$  iff we partake of the Form  $\Phi$ . 133d1-2

**G** 'Knows Form y' is a name of the Form of knowledge in us of Form y (unstated).  
There is nothing x that it is a likeness of the Form of knowledge in us of Form y. (**D** + **F**)

We do not partake of the Form of knowledge in us of Form y. [**(D + F) + I**] \*134b12

We are not called by a name of the Form of knowledge in us of Form y [**(D + F) + I** + **E\***]

We are not called by 'knows Form y.' [**((D + F) + I) + E\***] + **G**)